



## slender madtom

*Noturus exilis*

Kingdom:	Animalia
Division/Phylum:	Chordata - vertebrates
Class:	Osteichthyes
Family:	Cypriniformes
Order:	Ictaluridae

### Features

The slender madtom rarely exceeds four or five inches long. It has the eight barbels (whisker-like projections) around the mouth, spines in the pectoral and dorsal fins, and adipose (fat) fin in front of the tail fin characteristic of catfish. It also lacks scales. It has a body that is somewhat yellowish on the sides and darker on top. The belly is white to cream colored. It does not have a dark line along the side of the body. The head is small, narrow, and flattened. There is a light colored, bar-shaped mark on the back in front of the dorsal fin. There is a dark margin on the outside edge of the dorsal, anal, and tail fins. The upper jaw is somewhat longer than the lower. As with other madtoms, there is a poison gland at the base of the pectoral fin that causes a burning sensation if you are pricked with the fin.

### Natural History

The slender madtom is found in the large tributaries of the Mississippi River in riffle areas of small to

medium-sized streams. It occasionally is found in constructed lakes. Little is known about its life history, but it is thought that it deposits clusters of eggs (100 or fewer) in a shallow depression beneath a flat rock like other madtoms. A parent, probably the male, guards the eggs and newly hatched young.

### Habitats

interior rivers and streams; constructed lakes, ponds, and reservoirs

### Iowa Status

uncommon; native

### Iowa Range

Raccoon, Des Moines, Skunk, Iowa, and Cedar River drainages

### Bibliography

Iowa Department of Natural Resources. 2001.  
*Biodiversity of Iowa: Aquatic Habitats* CD-ROM.